E. Care of the Skin

515 The care the Hottentots take of their skin cannot be judged exclusively by our standards of cleanliness, principally because water is so valuable in that land.

1. Cleanliness

[207] During the hot season of the year, when there are great accumulations of water, as in the area of the Fish River, the Hottentot bathes. It is even said that he swims excellently. (66) But he shuns

66. Th. Hahn, Die Nama-Hottentotten. Ein Beitrag zur südafrikanischen Ethnographie (Globus, Bd. XII, 1867).

wash water as a daily method of keeping clean.

On the other hand, fresh ox dung and cow dung take the place of water, brush, and soap, and the dry air substitutes for a towel. However extraordinary this may seem at the first glance, such a way of washing is effective. The moisture in the manure suffices to loosen the sweat that has dried on the skin, the fine plant fibers scour ever more effectively, the drier they become in the course of the rubbing and finally the flat hand brushes off the last bit as a light dust from the part of the body that has been cleaned and at the same time pleasantly rubbed.

2. Massage

302 237 In order to give their skin the necessary suppleness, the Hottentots smear themselves with fat (≠ǂxaus(e)n or so/bos(e)n). They smear at least the face, the skin of the head, the hands and arms, but best of all, they like to smear their whole body. This is especially true of the women.

302 415 237 The containers for fat, *≠kxĩ·nas or *!gõ//nã/s, which are found in every hut where the inhabitants have pride in their appearance, are cut out of an oxhorn and the two openings are closed with cowhide, the bottom being firmly attached, the top moveable. The fat from

he tail of a fat-tailed sheep is preferred to that of cattle or goats be- 302
ause of its softness. The grease is poured into the ox horn containers 415
ver a small skin strip that lies inside, from which the salve can be [237]
onveniently stripped off in small quantities between the fingers.

Greasing the body with fat is also a thorough massage. The word
gu·ri designates both. For relieving a general [Picture. Horn Fat [757]
Containers. 1/4 natural size] sick feeling and for increasing [208] a
eeling of well-being (for example, to induce a pleasant feeling of
iredness before going to bed), massage is the Hottentots' favorite kind
f body care. [Picture. Pricked Ornamentation around the Horn Fat
Container. 1/2 natural size. The vertical lines follow the natural pat-
ern of the horn.]

3. Cosmetics

They try to give their skin a pleasant smell by powdering themselves 302
vith buchu (//nõs(e)n). The buchu, sã≠b, is a fine brown powder which 137
he women make out of the following ingredients, sometimes, just one, 303
ometimes mixed, according to what is available or to individual taste:

a) from the short, fleshy leaves of certain Mesembrianthemum species,
vhich they call gai- and *≠kχari-≠ga·eb. Instead of these leaves, the
boveground and underground parts of the most varied kinds of bushes
re used to prepare buchu, such as the slim bulblike, swollen root part
f a Cyperus species.

b) Lichen are favorite ingredients for buchu. The Parmelia hottentotta
Thbg.) Ach. is scraped off stones and therefore is called */u·i//kχao·b,
.e. "stone scratch." Other lichen for buchu have the names *!na·/robeb
nd *!u·/risã·b.

c) The powdery spores of a mushroom [Bauchpilz] (it seems to be a
odaxon species) are already so fine a powder, that the women hang
he dried spore container by a thread around their necks [209] and it
empties itself on their necks and breasts. The underground parts of the
nushroom are dried and pulverized.

The women keep the buchu herbs which they collect in a little bag, 303
vhich is made preferably from the skin of a lamb that was born pre- 302
maturely or has been taken from the body of the mother. The skin is [415]
emoved in one piece. The parts of the plants are pulverized on a
tone either as soon as they are dry or after a brief roasting over the
ire. The powder is then frequently mixed with fine quartz dust,

302 303 415

//guru·s, shaken into a flat, wooden dish, tsari·s, and purified of the coarser elements by winnowing.

302 415 237

The powder thus obtained is put in a tortoise-shell box, !ũ·ros, which is the indispensable toilet article of every woman and grown girl. The front opening of a tortoise shell is enlarged by cutting out a piece of the belly shield, the back opening is closed up with the blackened rosin of the same plant from which they make beads. [829] [Picture. Buchu boxes. 2/3 natural size.] Sometimes the dried skin and the retracted hind legs of the animal make enough of a closure. Sometimes the back closure is a hardened pulp made from the freshly crushed saliva gland of a cow instead of with rosin. A piece of soft jackal's skin serves as the front closure and as a powder container at the same time. A leather hand strap is pulled through a hole in the belly shell.

302 [515 841] [832]

The men rub only their armpits and neck with buchu but the women rub their whole body except their face. [210] With it they wipe off menstrual secretions and sweat from the skin and I was not able to check the account of one Hottentot that the women also sprinkle the vulva and vagina with buchu in order to win back maidenly charms by the contracting effect of the powder.

[854 764]

Sometimes, because of the pleasant odor, the women incense themselves (/ĩs(e)n) with buchu by placing the powder on hot stones and letting the smoke penetrate their clothes. Buchu is sprinkled on the skin swaddling clothes of babies and on the shrouds of the dead, and on graves.

[386]

To make the color of their skins more beautiful, women and girls paint (/ho/bo) their faces. The powder of a piece of clay called !naub, that is colored red by iron oxide is mixed into raw fat that has been made soft by chewing, and the salve is rubbed on the face with a finger. When the stone is lacking, iron rust is used as a substitute. The effect is that of an even brownish-red covering of the face, which even in our eyes, increases the charm of a pretty young face when it is well shaded in.

[386]

A remarkable beauty product is a dark brown sticky mass, which is at times found on the surface of rocks in layers as thick as one's finger and is called "stone sweat," */u·i aos·(e)ni (cf. Analysis in the Appendix). Little pieces are rubbed on a rock with water as though they were India ink and rubbed over the greased face. The smeary spotty distribution of this make-up is ugly.

shoulder opening, and bite or shot wounds. The skin of the right front leg serves as a mouth for filling and emptying and has a stone closure which can be easily untied. The freshly removed skin is turned inside out, the fleshy side is cleaned of all bits of meat and fat and then dried. The hair is left on and covers the inside of the sack. [Picture. Woman's Shoe. 1/4 Natural Size.] [Picture. The stone closure of the mouth of the skin water bag. The mouth is bent around and a stone (a) is put in the bend and the mouth is fastened to itself below the stone. The little stars indicate the beginning and end of the tying thread (on the right knotted around a little piece of wood. cf. next figure.]

Water stays fresher and cooler in sacks made of animal stomachs which the coast Hottentots, for example, make from the stomach of the Antarctic fur seal. [Picture. Permanent closure of an opening by means of a piece of wood and string. Holes are pierced in a circle around the area which is to be closed. A small stick of wood is stuck through these holes (direction indicated by arrows). To make the wood firm, a thread is tied in the manner illustrated.

4. Mixed Treatment

a) The skin of a goat, calf, oryx calf, steinbok, springbok, klipspringer, or a duikerbok are used for the knapsacks called //hō‡ti. [240] The animal's head is cut off and then a cut is made in a curve along the hindquarters and across the perineum. The skin is loosened with the fist and pulled off the body inside out. They first let the skin become rotten in the way described before. [Picture. Traveling Knapsack Made From a Goat's Skin. 1/6 Natural Size.] After depilation and it is dry, it is tanned as described in paragraph 1. In the finished sack the former hairy side is on the inside and the bottom of the sack is the former head end of the animal. [Picture. Small Household Knapsack, Made from Kid Skin. 1/6 Natural Size.]

The larger knapsacks are used for keeping all the things needed when traveling on foot, thus corresponding to our rucksacks. Smaller sacks serve as little purses. The women use them for their buchu herbs, the men (sometimes also the women) use them for pipe tobacco, and for tinder and flint. [241] Because of the last two items, the bags the men use are called doro //hō/s*

*The tinder box which is sold to the Hottentots by the white men is designated by the same

8: Dapper Q-4 (no date) 1933
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Cape Hottentot

raw, and seldom cooked, with entrails and guts as well, first however, pressing out the excrement backwards or squeezing it out with the teeth.

When they find no dead animals, they look along the shore for dead fish, and for limpets, periwinkles and oysters. They also delight in the flesh of sea-dogs or seals, which they kill at night with sticks when these beasts come by thousands to the beach and bleat like calves. The meat they consume raw, or roasted in the fire half done and unwashed. They are likewise no strangers to the blubber of whales and other sea monsters which are now and then washed up on shore. It has happened that they scooped out by handfuls, and gulped down like that, the sun-dried blubber of a whale stranded in the Salt River, also cutting out pieces which they buried under the sand to eat later[72]). At times they tear pieces with their teeth out of their hard sheepskin or sealskin cloaks, and eat these only slightly roasted on coals. The Beachrangers, or Hottentots living along the shore at the Cape, come to the ships of the Dutch, and betake themselves at once to the kitchen, where, if they can, they remove whole handfuls of the fat floating on top of the meat kettle, and toss it into their mouths without bread. They are very fond of our bread, for which they willingly exchange cattle. The Saldanhars or Kochoquas and other neighbouring Hottentots live in the dry summer time on their cattle, but in the winter on certain roots growing in the ground during the rainy season. The honey which collects on the bushes they eat with wax and all. Their sick people they usually feed on cabbage, mallow and mustard leaves, cooked with a little stamped blubber.

They drink water or the milk of their cattle, but also hanker very greedily after brandy and Spanish wine, as well as tobacco; although they become sated and drunk from only a little, when they create a tremendous tumult of shouting and babbling.

Industry.

They trouble themselves with hardly any handicrafts or industries, other than preparing rushes from which to make mats for covering their huts, and herding their cattle and sheep. By watching our countrymen, however, they have learned to forge for themselves the points of their darts and assegais from bits of old iron, which they find thrown away by us here and there.[73]) They use nothing more than one stone as an anvil, and another as a hammer, and make the iron malleable with charcoal.

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[72]) The incident is referred to in van Riebeeck's Dagverhaal, March 1-6, 1654.

9: Ten Rhyne D-5 (1673) 1933
FX13 Hottentot FX13
Cape Hottentot

CHAP. XXV.

Arts and Crafts.

You might as well look for jewels in a sty as for arts in this degraded people. Since however they wear skins sewn together with the needle, they cannot be absolutely said to be without arts and crafts. Their needles are of iron (for they have mines and, as I guess, very rich ones) or of ivory, and for thread they use the sinews of animals. They shave their hair skilfully with sharp razors, whence it follows that they are acquainted not only with the tailor's and the barber's craft, but also with that of the smith.

Hence they are provoked to a certain flattering conceit of themselves, although in truth they are rude creatures with no tincture of any arts except the humblest. Thus one of their chiefs gazing at a watch, and instructed by the owner in the use of it, said: "Why should not the Hottentots also make ones as good?" Some manufacture and play a musical instrument with the appearance and function of a flute [53]). Some pretend to the use of magic and would have it that they can catch fish by playing on the flute [54]).

CHAP. XXVI.

Their medical practices.

It is claimed that the human race has learned many methods of healing from the brute creation: for instance, emetics from dogs; from the ibis, an Egyptian bird, the use of the clyster; from the hippopotamus, common in these parts, phlebotomy; from goats, the excellence of dittany; from swallows that of chelidony; from snakes of fennel; from toads of the narrow-leaved plantain; from the weasel of rue; from the stork of wild marjoram; from boars of ivy; from stags of the artichoke; for it is true that nature is the teacher of all these. Why, then, should we be surprised if these peoples, brutish though they be, have some method of healing? Like Podalirius and Machaon in the Trojan war who did not so much apply their remedies in pestilence or in every sort of disease, but were accustomed especially to treat wounds, as Celsus says. Thus suction and anointing are the chief, nay, the only remedies of the Hottentots, for all they fear is

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53) This may possibly refer to the reed pipes of the Hottentots, already described by Dapper. See above, p. 35.

54) I can find no confirmation for this statement.

[See 8: Dapper, this File, cat. 116, p. 35. — Analyst]